



**Convention on the Elimination
of all Forms of Discrimination
Against Women**

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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Eleventh session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 201st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 28 January 1992, at 6.30 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. TALLAWY

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The meeting was called to order at 6.30 p.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued)

1. Ms. UKEJE said that she supported the statement by Ms. Bernard at the previous meeting of the Committee, to the effect that, while the Chairperson might agree to provide a summary of the Committee's consideration of reports from States parties to the Convention, that should not be seen as establishing a precedent. She expressed concern at the amount of time which had been spent on discussion and analysis, which had seriously eroded the time available to the working groups for examining reports from States parties and holding consultations with representatives of those Governments.
2. The CHAIRPERSON said that that issue would be considered further at the next session.
3. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ said, on a point of order, that reports should be drafted in such a way as to reduce the time the Committee needed to spend putting questions to Governments so as to make more time available for the consideration of second and third periodic reports.
4. The CHAIRPERSON said that the Committee had to analyse initial reports thoroughly before it could move on to consider subsequent ones. Consultations with Governments were, therefore, very useful; moreover, they served to demonstrate the careful consideration which the Committee gave to reports. However, in order to ensure maximum efficiency, the questions put to Governments should be formulated in a concise and analytical manner.

Report of Working Group I (CEDAW/C/WG.1/1992/WP.3) (continued)

Section 2: Dates and duration of the twelfth session

5. Ms. CREYDT (Secretary of the Committee) said that both recommendations listed in paragraph 6 - namely, that the Committee should have two sessions in 1993 on the extended session - would entail financial implications and the secretariat had, accordingly, prepared a preliminary assessment of those implications for the attention of the Economic and Social Council.
6. Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING said that she would prefer the first alternative.
7. The CHAIRPERSON, replying to a question from Ms. BERNARD, said that the decision to dispense with a pre-session working group prior to the second session - if indeed there were two sections - had been based on the understanding that that session would be concerned mainly with initial reports; so far only one of the second periodic reports due had been received.
8. Section 2 was adopted.

Section 3: Reports to be considered at the twelfth session

9. Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ said that three of the reports awaiting consideration were from States whose internal situation had undergone considerable upheaval. She suggested that the Committee should inform the Governments of those countries, namely, Romania, Ukraine and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, that they might wish to consider submitting additional information.
10. The CHAIRPERSON said that Romania should be added to the list of countries whose initial reports were awaiting consideration.
11. After a brief discussion, in which Ms. EVATT and Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING questioned the validity of considering reports submitted by the former USSR, in view of the dissolution of that State, the CHAIRMAN said that the secretariat had been correct to list the reports as received. According to established procedure, the Committee first decided which reports it wished to consider, and the then secretariat approached the Governments in question and asked them whether they were ready to submit their reports.
12. Ms. CREYDT (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Committee's practice should be consistent with that of other United Nations bodies. As Russia had succeeded the USSR in the Security Council, it would be appropriate to approach the Government of Russia to ask whether it wished to have the report of the USSR considered by the Committee.
13. The CHAIRPERSON said that it might be better to reword the heading of section 3 to read "Reports due for consideration at the twelfth and following sessions". With reference to paragraph 11, she informed the Committee that France had asked to be included among the countries whose reports would be considered at the twelfth session.
14. Ms. BERNARD said that France could perhaps replace Bangladesh in the list under second periodic reports. The criterion for the inclusion of countries was the order in which the reports were submitted, unless special circumstances obtained.
15. Ms. UKEJE, supported by Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ, said that the Committee should adhere to its criterion and that, if a country defaulted, another country could be added as a reserve, but that the established order could not be altered.
16. Ms. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) said that, while the Committee should make every effort to adhere to its list, a certain measure of flexibility was also required, as some pre-selection had been necessary in compiling the list and it sometimes happened that countries were not ready with their reports. If a country declared itself ready to submit its report and to answer questions on it, the Committee should be prepared to change the order of the list accordingly.

17. Ms. BERNARD said that the criterion of order of submission had not always been strictly adhered to. While the secretariat should be prepared to display a certain measure of flexibility, it was also essential that the Committee should be very precise in its procedure and should remain constantly mindful of the rationale behind the organization of its work.

18. The CHAIRPERSON suggested that the list should be left as it was and that the secretariat be given the flexibility to add, if necessary, additional names from the reserve list.

19. It was so decided.

Paragraph 12

20. Section 3 was adopted.

Section 4: Proposals for the Committee's contribution to the World Conference on Human Rights to be held in 1993

Recommendation (a)

21. Ms. EVATT said that, while the substance of the recommendation was sound and should be retained on the Committee's agenda, it did not belong within the context of proposals for the Committee's contribution to the World Conference. Accordingly, it should be deleted from the report.

22. It was so decided.

Recommendation (b)

23. The CHAIRPERSON wondered whether the translation of the Manual could be viewed as a contribution by the Committee to the World Conference.

24. Ms. ILIC said that, in its decision PC/5, the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights had recommended the preparation of a wide range of human rights documents and she felt that the Centre for Human Rights should, therefore, be interested in having the Manual published in as many languages as possible. Since the Manual had been issued fairly recently, it might have been overlooked by the Centre.

25. The CHAIRPERSON noted that while there was no opposition to the idea, in principle, it was not entirely clear to whom the recommendation should be addressed. If she heard no objection she would take it that the Committee wished to accept the recommendation in substance and to ask the Working Group to find a more appropriate wording.

26. It was so decided.

Recommendation (c)

27. The CHAIRPERSON requested clarification of the recommendation.

28. Ms. EVATT said that the Centre for Human Rights, as part of the world campaign for human rights, had published a number of fact sheets dealing with various human rights conventions and with the work of human rights bodies. Those documents contained very useful information and had been translated into all official languages. No such fact sheet had, as yet, been prepared on the work of the Committee or on its Convention.

29. Ms. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) said that the Convention had been published in the official languages of the United Nations, but not in brochure format. In addition, a publication covering the work of the Committee had been prepared in English, and translations into French and Spanish were under preparation. However, that document would not be suitable for publication as a brochure unless an abridged version was prepared.

30. Ms. OESER said that, while the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in Vienna had made extensive efforts to publicize the Convention and a large amount of material was available, within the United Nations system, on the Convention and the work of the Committee, the Committee's visibility and prestige would be considerably enhanced if a publication on its work and on the Convention could be prepared in the same series and distinctive blue binding as those on the other human rights bodies.

31. The CHAIRPERSON said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to ask the Working Group to revise the wording of the recommendation.

32. It was so decided.

Recommendation (d)

33. Ms. BUSTELO GARCIA del REAL said that the term "gender perspective" had been inadequately rendered in the Spanish translation of the report and that the Spanish term used was too narrow in its range.

34. Ms. BRAVO NUÑEZ DE RAMSEY said that usage within a single language differed from one country to another and that the meaning of the term used in the Spanish translation to render "gender perspective" was not clear to speakers of Ecuadorian Spanish.

35. After an extensive discussion, in which Ms. CREYDT (Secretary of the Committee), Ms. FORDE, Ms. ILIC, Ms. SCHÖPP-SCHILLING and the CHAIRPERSON, speaking in her capacity as a member of the Committee, took part, the CHAIRPERSON said that, if she heard no objection, she would take it that the

(Ms. Bravo Nuñez de Ramsey)

Committee wished to accept the substance of recommendation (d), but to request the Working Group to find a more appropriate wording.

36. It was so decided.

Recommendation (e)

37. After a discussion, in which Ms. BERNARD, Ms. EVATT, Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ and Ms. ILIC took part, the CHAIRPERSON said that, while in substance the recommendation was valuable, there were still many points that required clarification.

38. If she heard no objection, she would therefore take it that the Committee wished to defer consideration of the recommendation until a later session and, accordingly, to delete it from the report.

39. It was so decided.

Recommendation (f)

40. After an extensive discussion, in which Ms. CREYDT (Secretary of the Committee), Ms. FORDE, Ms. GONZALEZ MARTINEZ, Ms. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Director, Division for the Advancement of Women) and the CHAIRPERSON, speaking also in her personal capacity, participated, the CHAIRPERSON said that it would be inappropriate to ask for a session of the World Conference to be devoted to specific gender violations, since that would occasion too much controversy and would not constitute a positive contribution to the World Conference's work. However, it was important that the Committee, in accordance with the recommendations of General Assembly resolution 46/116, paragraph 4, should request the secretariat to prepare a report focusing on the womens' rights aspect of human rights with the aim of demonstrating that negation of womens' rights was tantamount to negation of the totality of human rights. If the Committee could convince the World Conference on Human Rights that womens' rights were also human rights, that, in itself, would be a valuable contribution to the work of the Conference. She suggested, therefore, that recommendation (f) should be deleted.

41. It was so decided.

Section 5: Contribution of the Committee to the International Year of the Family in 1994

42. The CHAIRPERSON said that, in preparing the proposed analysis of article 16 of the Convention, it should be stressed that the International Year of the Family should not be used as a platform for attacks against womens' employment rights or to encourage the view that the exercise by women of their right to work had undermined the foundations of the family.

Section 6: Contribution of the Committee to the World Conference on Women in 1995

43. The CHAIRPERSON said that the wording of the recommendation, particularly the meaning of the word "evaluation", was not clear. She suggested, therefore, that the matter be deferred to the next session, on the understanding that the Committee should be prepared, at the next session, to give the secretariat precise guidelines on the scope and nature of the evaluation required.

44. It was so decided.

Section 7: Suggestions for consideration at the fourth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies

45. Ms. BUSTELO GARCIA del REAL said that, in her view, the meeting of chairpersons should be used to publicize the general recommendation on violence against women put forward by the Committee in 1992. While the other human rights bodies would automatically learn about the recommendation once it had been approved, the meeting of chairpersons would provide a good opportunity for strengthening its impact.

46. The CHAIRPERSON said that the meeting would also provide a good opportunity to convey to the other human rights bodies the necessity to adopt a gender perspective in their work. It was possible that the other bodies ignored women's rights issues in the belief that those were the exclusive province of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and it was important, therefore, to encourage all human rights monitoring bodies to include inquiries about women's rights as a regular feature of their work. In addition, the other human rights bodies could be encouraged to examine the issue of violence, with particular reference to the rights of women.

The meeting rose at 8.35 p.m.